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Statement submitted by Corporación Cultural Nueva Acrópolis Chile, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Adherence to United Nations principles

On the occasion of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development, the Corporación Cultural Nueva Acrópolis Chile:

Commemorates the resolve of humanity as a whole to uphold human dignity everywhere and in all circumstances and the fact that, in that spirit, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

Reiterates its commitment to collaborate in upholding the principles that inspire the United Nations and that are echoed in the principles of the international organization New Acropolis, of which the Corporación Cultural Nueva Acrópolis Chile is a member, as stated in article 1 of its Founding Charter, namely, to "promote an ideal of international fraternity, based on respect for human dignity, beyond racial, sexual, cultural, religious, social or other differences".

In line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth, recognizes adolescents and young people as being entitled to the full enjoyment of rights, with no temporal, biological, ethnic, sexual or other characteristic providing a valid argument for excluding them from forming and consolidating their personalities, receiving a good quality education and thereby achieving personal security and motivating plans for their future.

Recognizes its vocation to permanently include the younger generations so as to ensure that civil society contributes to the understanding of today's problems and therefore aims to encourage young people to engage in the comparative study of arts, science and religion in order to promote a global view of individuals and the world. The international network of New Acropolis member associations is made up of thousands of young people around the world.

Recognizes that developing the best in human potential is a goal to be pursued at every stage of life and that young people are at a time in their lives when their personalities are being formed and consolidated and their spirituality awakened through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, personal security and plans for their future, all of which drives the forces of change and freedom within them and naturally motivates them to assume an active role in transforming and improving the world through their very diversity.

We reiterate our commitment, in line with that made at the New Acropolis General Assembly of 2006, to the education of young people, in a context of respect, solidarity and shared responsibility and guided by the ethical and philosophical principles of our network of international organizations which, drawing on its integrative function, promotes the teaching of philosophy as a way of understanding and transforming human beings and their environment.

About the younger generations

Looking outward from a perspective of timeless ethics and not of ever-changing moralities, we steer away from outdated biases that view youth as nothing more than a transitional stage on the road to adulthood and, with the understanding that it is not enough to recognize young people as individuals deserving of rights, we view them as individuals with historical obligations and societal actors who, having insufficient tools at their disposal, face uncertainties hindering the achievement of their overall development.

Beyond simply calling out young people for their apathy towards participating in politics and philosophy, we wish to express concern for what we consider to be the root causes of a crisis whose chief perceptible symptoms are violence in its many forms and hopelessness among today's youth.

First, we wish to mention that the use of young people as a resource by myriad external socioeconomic actors is undermining educational systems by shifting their focus to the creation of producers and consumers and by discouraging criticism and impeding the search for ways to achieve profound transformation in the world.

At the same time, young people are systematically affected by various types of pollution relating to the environment, corruption and their own mental and physical health, which inhibit the full development of their potential. Such pollution is artificial, caused by external manipulation, and brings out the worst of human nature, emerging as violence, addiction and a lack of hope.

Cloistered by fear, the false need for caution and the collapse of benchmark institutions in all fields, young people are bombarded by the promotion of production and consumption as a reason for living and the hopelessness of achieving a better future, while they are less able to fight the very things keeping them subjugated.

This learned fear, which could be superficially interpreted as a paralyzing fear that inhibits participation, leads them to desperately seek distraction or an escape from a reality they feel ill-equipped to face.

Recommendations for young people

On the basis of our experience working with young people in 60 countries around the world, we invite you to make the most of Eastern and Western classical teachings, which have made important contributions to all of humanity in its quest for knowledge, with eyes always on the future while encouraging interculturalism as a means for further community-building and fostering concern for others, finding in service the perfect fulfilment of the highest teachings.

The active philosophy proposed by New Acropolis, of which we are a member, is not limited to comparative studies; it also requires a commitment to become involved, to step forward through volunteerism and to act in accordance with the noblest ideals of humanity. Philosophy could help young people to discover meaning and new teachings that could become fertile ground for proposing the kind of transformative change that would propel humanity towards a better path.

We encourage the younger generations to demand meaningful participation that requires them to rediscover their voices and their desires, defend their rights and meet their obligations, so they can take part in the writing of history, which will also be their history, open their eyes and renew their connection to themselves and to nature, without capitulating, so they know that they are not alone in the fight for a new and better world.

Recommendations for States and civil society

We propose that States promote education policies offering outlets beyond the basic production/consumption mentality, severing the ties that stifle individualism and, by valuing other people as full human beings, fostering models of coexistence and collaboration that prize life-enhancing diversity, and emphasizing what we have in common rather than our personal interests.

We propose that education systems encourage thinking that is deeply rooted in our historical reality, so that needs and targets can be identified and expressed from a philosophical starting-point. Philosophy should not be anchored in the present or in

the past. On the contrary, a forward-looking approach is needed, inviting young people to embark on the adventure of thinking about tomorrow, with proposals for a fairer and more inclusive world.

We urge civil society to set an example of the genuine reflection which the historical context requires of us and to use civic forums to rethink political, social and environmental involvement. In this task, philosophy itself can promote dialogue and consensus beyond our individual selves.

Philosophy encourages us to analyze causes in depth, exploring further, seeking the root of problems and fostering problem-solving through interactive dialogue on the huge challenges facing humankind today.

Lastly, we feel united with young people in their desire for a different reality, in which there is no discrimination and humans are empowered to build a new and better world.